

# 100 FILMS in 10 GENRES

A Modest Film Guide, by Matt Pierard  
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## ADVENTURE



## CLASSIC COMEDY CLASSIC DRAMA



## COMING-OF-AGE HORROR/FANTASY MODERN COMEDY MODERN DRAMA MUSICAL POLITICS SCIENCE FICTION

CLASSIC: 1920 – 1966  
MODERN: 1967 – Present

## **ADVENTURE**

### **3:10 to Yuma**

Bug-eyed Van Heflin plays a failed farmer in the American Southwest; Glenn Ford is the semi-successful gunslinger Heflin has volunteered to take on the title train to claim his reward. Tension builds slowly and effectively.

### **Assault on Precinct 13**

John Carpenter's best film is this suspenseful crime flick, set in an undermanned Los Angeles police station being stalked by heavily-armed thugs.

### **King Solomon's Mines**

Stewart Granger at his most virile squires around lovely Deborah Kerr and others in search of title booty. Shot on location in Africa.

### **Safety Last**

Harold Lloyd silently defies gravity as he climbs up an L.A. department store building to impress his boss and girlfriend.



Hepburn & Bogart, *The African Queen*

### **The African Queen**

A grizzly Humphrey Bogart won his only Oscar as a drunken steamboat captain in WWI-era Africa, with a holier-than-thou Kate Hepburn as his annoying passenger. Of course they fall in love.

### **The General**

Buster Keaton is a klutzy coal-shoveler for the title steam engine in this Civil War-era adventure. Tons of comic suspense as he tries to evade the enemy, culminating in spectacular set piece.



Bogart, *The Maltese Falcon*

### **The Maltese Falcon**

Bogart is Sam Spade, a private eye in pre-WWII San Francisco. Mary Astor is the femme fatale who engages him into a spiraling murder mystery involving the title object, a priceless artifact sought by a rogue's gallery.

### **The Sundowners**

Deb Kerr and Robert Mitchum play roaming Irish shepherders in 1920's Australia, along with their teenage son and an itinerant philosopher, Peter Ustinov.

### **The Thief of Baghdad**

Douglas Fairbanks Sr. athletically plays the title role in this silent epic filled with opulent sets and costumes. The restored version features scenes tinted in shades of gold and violet.

### **To Have and Have Not**

Bogart romances sultry vixen – and future real-life wife – Lauren Bacall in this WWII-era picture set in the Caribbean. French resistance fighters hire the reluctant hero to transport one of their leaders to safety

## CLASSIC COMEDY

### **Adam's Rib**

Married lawyers Spencer Tracy and Kate Hepburn go up against each other in a case of attempted murder; she represents the cuckolded wife of the adulterous heel Spence takes on and the sparks fly in and out of the courtroom.



Tracy & Hepburn, *Adam's Rib*

### **All About Eve**

Brilliant satire of theater professionals and the bitchy little title minx (Anne Baxter) who invades their territory, led by Bette Davis as the exploited but resilient stage diva Margo Channing.

### **Auntie Mame**

Roz Russell sparkles in title role as madcap heiress who devotes her life to orphaned nephew Patrick, from the late 20's to the late 40's. Wonderful observations on bohemian versus 'high' society.

## **Ball of Fire**

Sexy band singer (and mobster's moll) Barbara Stanwyck holes up in houseful of virginal elderly professors working on an encyclopedia. Naturally she falls for the youngest, Gary Cooper, who she names 'Pottsie', much to the thug's disgust.



Stanwyck & Cooper, *Ball of Fire*

## **Duck Soup**

The Marx Brothers at the their very best in this political satire set in the mythical kingdom of Fredonia. It's a collection of smart-aleck remarks and sight gags that has influenced, well, everybody in comedy.

## **His Girl Friday**

He is Cary Grant as a ruthless newspaper editor; she is his ex-wife, played by Rosalind Russell, a top-flight writer who has quit the business to marry a clueless nerd from squaresville. Then there's a big prison break and all hell breaks loose.

### **It Happened One Night**

Clark Gable is a relentless newspaper reporter, Claudette Colbert the spoiled runaway bride from whom he gets the inside story, and of course they fall in love along the way.

### **One, Two, Three**

Harried Coca-Cola bureau chief in Berlin, James Cagney, has to pull out all the stops – via director Billy Wilder's screenplay – to appease the boss' daughter when she marries a handsome young Commie, Horst Bucholz.

### **Singin' In the Rain**

Matchless showbiz satire set at the time silents ended and sound began in the Hollywood film business. Tons of period flavor, witty dialogue, and songs sung by vibrant cast, including Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds.

### **The Philadelphia Story**

Haughty society girl (Kate Hepburn) is set to marry a lower-class guy everybody knows is wrong for her when who should show up but hubby #1, played by Cary Grant, who just can't let her go.

## **CLASSIC DRAMA**

### **All My Sons**

Burt Lancaster seethes as the bitter son of wealthy, widely-admired business man Edward G. Robinson, whom Burt knows is actually a WWII war profiteer, whose greed killed many innocent soldiers.

### **Black Narcissus**

Deborah Kerr plays an Anglican nun who sets up a convent in a remote Asian mountain village, but never can quite overcome the romanticism of the pagan lifestyle. Incredibly shot almost entirely on a British soundstage.

### **Cat On A Hot Tin Roof**

Liz Taylor as Maggie the Cat, sultry wife of failed football hero Paul Newman, spend time in the country with his wealthy family, led by stage vets Burl Ives & Judith Anderson in Tennessee Williams' best play.

### **Doctor Zhivago**

Sprawling romantic epic set in Russia during the Communist revolution, stars Omar Sharif as the handsome title hero in love with two women – Geraldine Chaplin and Julie Christie. Who will he ultimately choose?

### **Le Jour se Leve**

Jean Gabin stars as a rough & tumble blue collar worker who holes up in his one-room apartment after shooting the abusive lover of one of his girlfriends.





Grant & Bergman, *Notorious*

### **Notorious**

Cary Grant plays a US government operative who coaxes the American daughter of a Nazi sympathizer to seduce and marry one of his compadres in post-war Rio de Janeiro, to clear her own name by getting the goods on him, a weakling played by Claude Rains.

### **Now, Voyager**

Bette Davis in one of her best romantic roles as repressed spinster who puts her life in turnaround after psychotherapy, diet, and a complete makeover. She is helped along by shrink Rains and suave French lover, Lloyd Henreid.



Henreid & Davis, *Now, Voyager*

### **The Ox-Bow Incident**

Henry Fonda as a cowboy with a conscience tries to stop the execution of a man (Dana Andrews) he's pretty sure is innocent in this scathing look at mob violence.

### **To Kill A Mockingbird**

Small-town lawyer Greg Peck defends a gentle black man falsely accused of raping a poverty-stricken white woman in 1930's Alabama. All of the events unfold in the eyes of his loving children, Scout and Jem.

### **Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?**

Elizabeth Taylor owns the screen and earns second Oscar as bitter, boozy wife of failed college prof Richard Burton in this acerbic Edward Albee play, directed by Mike Nichols.

## **COMING-OF-AGE**

### **A Tree Grows in Brooklyn**

Peggy Ann Garner is an adolescent girl growing up in a turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup> Century New York tenement with an alcoholic father and a no-nonsense mother. The girl yearns to attend a quality high school which she hopes will get her out of the slums.

### **Beautiful Thing**

Two teen aged British boys living in a lower-class apartment house fall in love, despite their parents' misgivings. In support, their best black chick friend, a nutty girl obsessed with the music of Mama Cass.

### **Breaking Away**

Four working-class 19 year-olds in Bloomington, Indiana try to figure out what they're going to do for the rest of their lives. Dave (Dennis Christopher), is a would-be pro bicyclist, who falls for a college girl and enters a city-wide relay race, with his three pals as his reluctant team.

### **Experience Preferred... But Not Essential**

Set in the early 1960's, Elizabeth Edmonds plays an innocent college student who takes a summer job in a British seaside resort as a housekeeper, alongside a gallery of more experienced types, including her slutty roomie.

### **Lucas**

Pint-sized teen genius (Corey Haim) deals with wealthier high school crowd and lovesick fellow outcast (Winona Ryder) in this sweet slice-of-life sleeper.

### **Pariah**

Butch, black lesbian teen struggles with her identity in repressive society of middle-class New York. A real eye-opener to homophobia, particularly in the case of her best friend and their separate dealing with their aghast mothers.

### **The Breakfast Club**

Five bored teenagers spend a Saturday in detention at a Chicago-area high school, monitored by a conservative school counselor. They act out, play pranks, dance, cry, and come to terms with themselves through the course of the day.

### **The Last Picture Show**

In a dying Texas oil town of the 1950's, a group of high school grads make plans for their respective futures. Prom queen (Cybil Shepherd) has stars in her eyes, dumping unambitious bf (Jeff Bridges) for the smart set at college.

### **The Reivers**

Adolescent boy joins errant uncle (Steve McQueen) and a black field hand in his grandpa's stolen car. Based on a story by William Faulkner.

## **The Year My Voice Broke**

Australian sleeper about a country boy's adventures at school and in love with local beauty, who belongs to his best friend.

## **HORROR/FANTASY**

### **An American Werewolf in London**

Wicked horror satire changed the film landscape with its combination of state-of-the-art gruesome fx and witty dialogue. Former teen idol David Naughton stars as title creature.

### **Carrie**

The first and best version of Stephen King's story of an emotionally-abused teenager (Sissy Spacek) who lashes out with newly-found telekinetic powers at her foes, including holy-joe mom, played by Piper Laurie.



Jane Randolph, *Cat People*

### **Cat People**

Val Lewton's suspense classic from the 40's about immigrant girl (Simone Simon) with supernatural ability to turn feline when angered. This does not bode well for American bf, Kent Smith or his sexy pal, Jane Randolph.

### **Howl's Moving Castle**

Imaginative Japanese animated fantasy from the same director of *Spirited Away* also involves little girl in a magical land of liquid dissolves and ultimate heroism.

### **I Walked With A Zombie**

Atmospheric chiller about supernatural adventures of a nurse to a wealthy woman on a Caribbean isle. Low on gore, with really only one shocking scene, but memorable.

### **Jaws**

Spielberg's early masterpiece of slow-building terror will make you sleep with the lights on, or at least keep you out of the ocean – or swimming pool – for weeks

### **La Belle a Bete**

Josette Day is the sweetest daughter of a middle-class businessman who is forced to sell her to a wealthy recluse (Jean Marais in fantastic creature makeup) in order to pay her greedy sisters' bills. A beautiful film with many stunning effects.

### **Repulsion**

Catherine Deneuve in a change-of-pace role as a hyper-neurotic beauty who refuses to leave her Paris flat. Her descent into madness is unsettling to say the least.

### **The Birds**

Saucy rich girl (Tippi Hedren) seemingly inspires title creatures to attack small California fishing village in Hitchcock's last great picture.

### **The Craft**

Put-upon teen girls form witches' coven in modern Los Angeles, led by a punky Fairuza Balk. As their powers grow, so does Balk's megalomania, putting them all at risk of discovery.



## **MODERN COMEDY**

### **An Unmarried Woman**

Jill Clayburgh shines in title role as she tries to reinvent herself without her smarmy, adulterous husband (Michael Murphy) by her side. After several painfully-funny bad dates, she finally finds the right replacement, or does she?

### **Annie Hall**

Woody Allen's semi-autobiographical valentine to former gf Diane Keaton, simultaneously goofy and lovely in the title role.

### **Forgetting Sarah Marshall**

A schnook gets dumped by his bad actress girlfriend and eventually finds love again in Hawaii with a nice girl in the service industry.

### **Groundhog Day**

Snide weatherman (Bill Murray) keeps living title holiday over and over again until he learns something about humanity. Andie MacDowell plays his unrequited object of affection.

### **Hairspray**

John Waters' best mainstream film set in early 60's Baltimore, about a chubby, lovable teenage girl (Ricki Lake) and her devotion to pop culture and civil rights. Supporting cast includes drag queen Divine as her mom.

### **In & Out**

Breakthrough comedy was first hit with gay theme about a small-town teacher (Kevin Kline) outed by a former student despite the fact that said teach has yet to admit it to himself, much less his impending bride (Joan Cusack).

### **Shaun of the Dead**

Dryly funny satire of zombie film genre starring Simon Pegg as salesman who takes his time to realize his town is newly populated with the undead.

### **Sleepless in Seattle**

Charming romantic comedy of lonely widower (Tom Hanks) who has a meet-cute with unhappily-engaged reporter (Meg Ryan) by way of his nosy, un-cute young son.

### **The Last Detail**

Adult comedy of two Navy M.P.s taking pathetic AWOL sailor to the brig, featuring a foul-mouthed Jack Nicholson and nerdy Randy Quaid. Various adventures ensue, highlighted by a trip to a bordello.

### **Trading Places**

Eddie Murphy plays a would-be con artist who gets to trade places with a wealthy snob (Dan Ackroyd) via a bet by the latter's mentors, two mean old brothers, to see who falls the hardest. And then the tables are turned...

## **MODERN DRAMA**

### **Apocalypse Now**

Harrowing look at Vietnam in the depths of its madness, based on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and starring Martin Sheen as its conflicted hero. Coppola is yet to top or equal it.

### **Chinatown**

Brilliantly sordid tale of 1930's Los Angeles and an obscenely wealthy man who controls the city's water supply. Jack Nicholson plays a hard-bitten P.I. searching for the killer of the husband of a mysterious beauty (Faye Dunaway) with whom he falls in love.



Nicholson, *Chinatown*

### **Five Easy Pieces**

Nicholson in his first starring role as a concert pianist, son of a famous conductor, who ditches the high life for a series of menial jobs and affairs with lower-class women.

## **Going Places**

Gerard Depardieu and Patrick Dewaere are young thugs on a spree in Paris and the French countryside doing very bad things and getting involved with sexy older woman, Jeanne Moreau.

## **Klute**

Jane Fonda won her first Oscar as a lonely call girl who is trying to quit the business when somebody kills a former client and the title detective (Donald Sutherland) comes to investigate.

## **Reds**

Sweeping epic of the rise of Communism and its American adherents in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Plays like a who's who of then-famous talent led by naïve journalist John Reed (Warren Beatty), and his less-gifted but loving wife, Louise Bryant (Diane Keaton).

## **Running On Empty**

Christine Lahti is heartbreaking as a former campus radical on the run after accidental manslaughter, with her husband and two sons. She, co-star River Phoenix (as her older boy), and Naomi Foner's screenplay all received well-deserved Academy Award nominations.

## **The Accused**

Jodie Foster won her first Oscar as a trashy girl who is gang-raped in a barroom, then fights for her dignity against the leader of the mob. Gritty, no-frills courtroom drama. Kelly McGillis co-stars as her determined lawyer.

### **The English Patient**

Romantic, WWII-era epic about title anti-hero (Ralph Fiennes), burnt to a crisp and under the care of a dedicated French nurse (Juliette Binoche) at a damaged Italian villa in the last year of the war. Flashbacks reveal tumultuous events leading up to his current state.

### **The Tree of Life**

Terrence Malick's lyrical tale of an adolescent boy growing up in early 60's Texas with a tough-loving dad (Brad Pitt) and a kind Christian mom (Jessica Chastain).

## **MUSICAL**

### **An American in Paris**

Gene Kelly plays the title role as a post-war ex-pat painter who falls in love with lovely younger woman despite the allure of his sultry lady bountiful. All songs by the Gershwin Brothers.

### **Brigadoon**

Kelly and Van Johnson are magically transformed into visitors to the mythical title village in the Scottish highlands, where Gene falls hard for town beauty, Cyd Charisse. They sing, they dance, but only for 24 hours at which end Gene has to make a decision to go or stay.

### **Cabaret**

Mordant look at pre-WWII Berlin through the eyes of a British tutor (Michael York) and his tarty American chanteuse lover (Liza Minnelli); features songs by Kander & Ebb, directed to Oscar gold by Bob Fosse.

### **Hair**

A group of young people in late 1960's NYC experience the Age of Aquarius via free love and various pharmaceuticals. One of the last great movie musicals.

### **In The Good Old Summertime**

Judy Garland and Van Johnson in a musical remake of The Shop Around The Corner. She's an uptight salesgirl, he's a bossy shop supervisor in S.Z. Sakall's music store. Unbeknownst to them, they are pen pals falling in love.

### **Meet Me In St. Louis**

Garland glows under future husband Vincente Minnelli's romantic direction of this timeless classic about a St Louis family's eventful year before the coming Exposition of 1903. Co-starring Margaret O'Brien as her bratty kid sister.



Garland, *Meet Me in St. Louis*

### **Show Boat**

Original filming of the Broadway chestnut, by horror-meister James Whale, features Irene Dunne as its plucky heroine and Helen Morgan as a doomed mixed-race diva.

### **Swing Time**

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers at their best in formula musical comedy about saucy girl initially not interested in suave leading man. Fav dance occurs in circular waiting room at the theatrical office in which Ginger works.

### **The Band Wagon**

Astaire and his company of players strive to present an

'important' play that withers on the vine. Then they add peppy musical numbers and voila, it's a hit! Features lovely dance in the park with Cyd Charisse.

### **Victor/Victoria**

Julie Andrews' last musical film has her playing a female impersonator in 1930's Paris, aided by the real thing (Robert Preston), a beloved former star. In struts studly Jim Garner as a Chicago theatrical agent who falls hard for Julie, despite all the gender-bending implications.



## **POLITICS**

### **Citizen Kane**

Orson Welles controversial satire on the life of publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst virtually got him blackballed overnight. Filled with spectacular shots and genius pacing, featuring fellow Mercury Theater players Joseph Cotten and Agnes Moorehead.

### **Milk**

Sean Penn earned his second Oscar as San Francisco politician Harvey Milk in his fight for gay civil rights. Quasi-documentary feel adds to film's success.

### **Primary Colors**

Thorough trashing of a Bill Clintonish, ambitious, skirt-chasing Southern politico (John Travolta in a fat suit) running for President in 1990's America. Kathy Bates rocks as his dedicated consultant; Emma Thompson suffers bravely as his loyal wife.

### **Seven Days in May**

Burt Lancaster plays an arrogant US Army general leading an attempt at a fascist coup over the American government. Conflicted best buddy, fellow soldier Kirk Douglas is determined to stop him.

### **Silkwood**

Small-town worker bee (Meryl Streep) in a nuclear processing plant discovers corruption and fights against dangerous working conditions with help of lover (Kurt Russell). Based on true story of Karen Silkwood.

### **State of the Union**

Multimillionaire industrialist (Spencer Tracy) is tapped to run for public office by cadre of wealthy professionals, led by a seductive young Angela Lansbury, despite second thoughts by loyal wife (Katharine Hepburn). Sharp script could have been written yesterday.

### **The Best Man**

Elder statesman Hank Fonda versus younger Cliff Robertson – each with then-dangerous skeletons in their respective closets – in no-holds-barred contest, led by Gore Vidal's knowing screenplay.

### **The Candidate**

Handsome, earnest senator's son (Robert Redford) runs for public office and meets opposition head-on. Peter Boyle rules as his aggressive, no-nonsense campaign manager.

### **The China Syndrome**

Released around the time of the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster, this tense drama features Jack Lemmon as a conflicted nuclear plant worker and Jane Fonda as a reporter covering a potential meltdown.

## **The Contender**

A Democratic president (Jeff Bridges) taps a Republican junior senator (Joan Allen) for his new veep, despite the underhanded machinations of a bitterly jealous conservative (Gary Oldman) with an axe to grind.

## **SCIENCE FICTION**

### **Aliens**

Tremendous sequel to Alien brings heroine Ellen Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) into the future, decades after her ordeal versus title monsters on a mineral-rich planet. This time she's aided by a team of tough Marines, including muscular Jenette Goldstein, wiseass Bill Paxton, and heroic Michael Biehn.

### **Contact**

Jodie Foster is a scientist trying to make contact with aliens. When she finally achieves this goal, she's shut out of a meet-and-greet because of her religious beliefs. No matter, she eventually gets there on her own.

### **Event Horizon**

Team of astronauts led by Laurence Fishburne search for abandoned title space vessel. When found, a horror show awaits them inside, invading their minds and turning their worst nightmares real.



McCarthy, *Invasion of the Body-Snatchers*

### **Invasion of the Body-Snatchers**

Denizens of a small California town are gradually being replaced by plant-based organisms from outer space. A group of friends, led by Kevin McCarthy, try to stop them from taking over the world.

### **Paul**

Title alien escapes holding facility in famed Area 51 with reluctant aid of two British tourists obsessed with science fiction. Hilarious satire of the genre highlighted by road trip chase by bumbling US Govt agents.

### **Star Wars**

The original and best of George Lucas' overrated space saga features young and still handsome Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker, adventurer Han Solo (Harrison Ford), and earnest, wise-cracking Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) in their fight for freedom, love, and glory.

## **The Day the Earth Stood Still**

Original and far superior version of the tale of an alien emissary of peace (Michael Rennie) determined to stop Earthlings committing the interstellar crime of war.



Rennie, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*

## **The Terminator**

The granddaddy of all current killer-robot flicks starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as the unrelenting title cyborg intent on preventing the birth of future human freedom fighter, John Connor.

## **The Thing (From Another World)**

Man-shaped organism lands near an arctic mineral-mining operation and science expedition. The scientists bring the assumed corpse to their lab, then soon regret said action with much macho firepower. Manages to pack a punch with a minimum of gore.

## **War of the Worlds**

H.G. Wells' classic about Martians invading Earth stars Gene Barry as scientist hero, Ann Robinson as his girl, and seminal, award-winning special effects.

## **100 Films in 10 Genres**

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